Annual Report

1984-1985

Alberta

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

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Office of the Minister

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

403 Legislature Building, Edmonton, Alberta, Canada T5K 2B6 403/427-3017

March 1986

The Honourable Frank Lynch-Staunton
Lieutenant-Governor of the Province of Alberta
3rd floor, Legislature Building
1 Legislature Grounds
Edmonton, Alberta
T5K 2B6

Sir:

The undersigned has the honour to submit the Annual Report of the Department of Housing for the year ending March 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,

Larry R. Shaben

Alberta

DEPARTMENT OF HOUSING

403/427-3917

Office of
the Deputy Minister

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March 1986

Honourable Larry R. Shaben
Minister of Housing
403 Legislature Building
1 Legislature Grounds
Edmonton, Alberta
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Sir:

I have the honour to submit herewith a report on the activities of the Alberta Department of Housing for the fiscal year ending March 31, 1985.

Respectfully submitted,

M. D. Rasmusson
Deputy Minister

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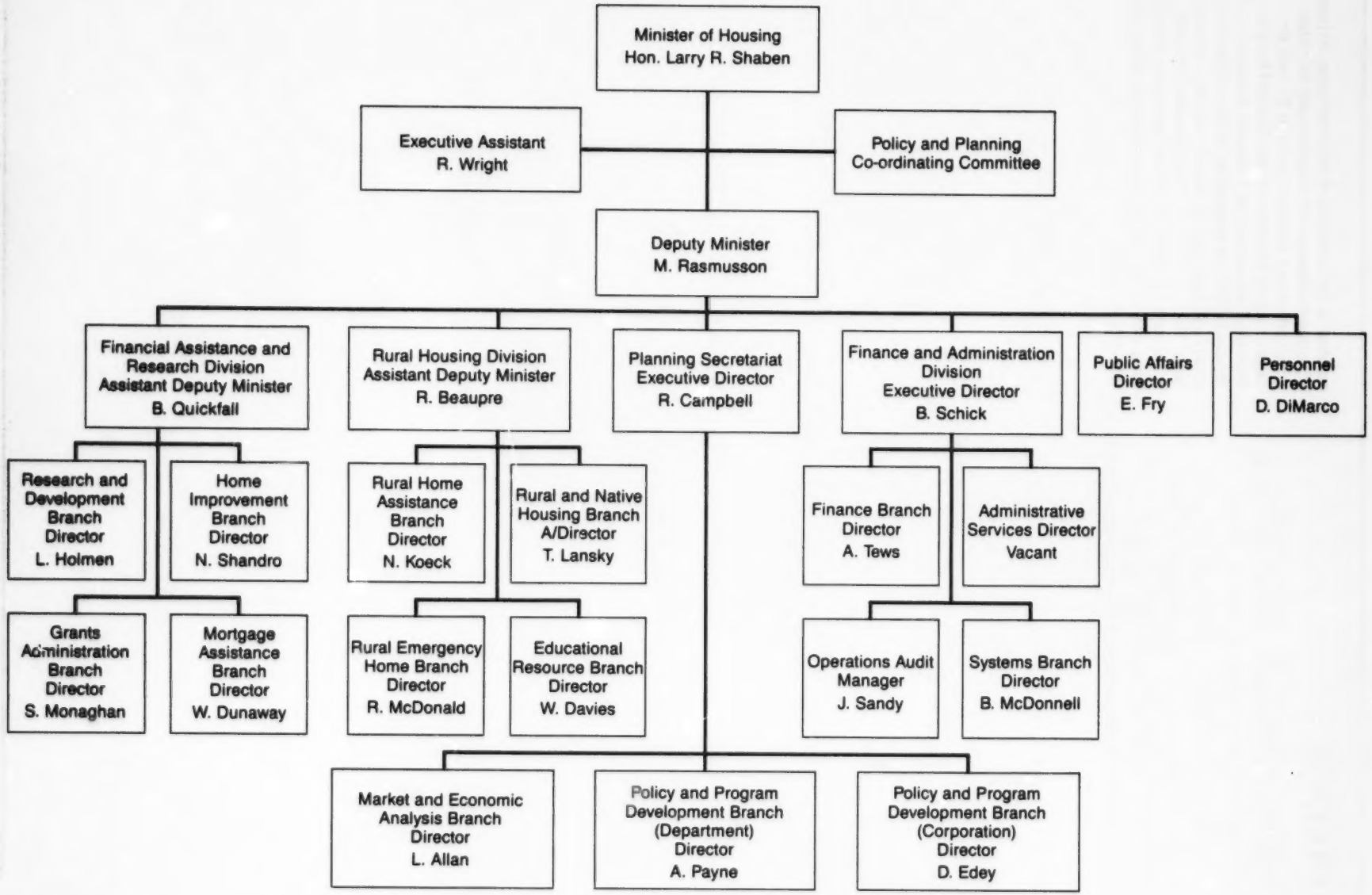
PREFACE

In response to changing housing market and fiscal conditions, and the reduction of government activity in the area of housing, the three housing agencies, Alberta Department of Housing, Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation and Alberta Housing Corporation were reorganized during the 1984/85 reporting period. The reorganization resulted in amalgamation of the two Crown Corporations into the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. In the Department of Housing, reorganization resulted in the formation of three operating divisions: the Planning Secretariat with responsibility for policy development and planning functions for both the Department of Housing and the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation; the Financial Assistance and Research Division responsible for the administration of grants and for technical research and development; and the Rural Housing Division which provides financial, administrative, construction and renovation training programs for modest housing, primarily to families in northern Alberta.

Alberta Department of Housing
March 31, 1985



I. Financial Assistance and Research Division

The Financial Assistance and Research Division was established October 1, 1984 as a result of the reorganization of the Department of Housing. This Division administers grants in the areas of home improvement, mortgage assistance and financial incentives for rental housing. The Division is also responsible for technical research and development in the areas of housing and land development.

The Division has four branches: Research and Development, Home Improvement, Grants Administration and Mortgage Assistance.

RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT BRANCH

The Research and Development Branch conducts and supports housing research and development which offers to improve the quality or performance of housing, or reduce housing costs. Priority areas are building design, construction technology, energy conservation, site and subdivision planning and information technology. In addition, residential building product development has emerged as a new priority.

The branch administers:

— the Innovative Housing Grants Program;

— the Competition for Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design;

— Department of Housing land banks; and

— housing registries, which provide housing referral services in selected cities.

Major Activities

Most research and development work was carried out through the Innovative Housing Grants Program. This program provides grants of up to $25,000 to industry, organizations and individuals for housing research and development projects. In 1984/85, 19 projects were completed. Most were documented and reports were published to encourage the application of project results. Some of the major projects completed under this program are outlined below:

The Airtight Drywall Approach Demonstration Project

The Department completed its first demonstration projects to illustrate cost-effective, energy-efficient construction technology. The project consisted of the construction and monitoring of six houses. Three houses utilized the new construction methods and three were control houses built in accordance with conventional practice. The demonstration houses are still being monitored. Results to date are encouraging and interest in the approach remains high. The demonstration project was initiated after the completion of a feasibility study which developed and assessed the technology. This study is documented in a report entitled "A New Approach to Affordable Low Energy House Construction" by Joseph W. Lstiburek, James K. Lischkoff and the Centre for Building Science, University of Toronto. Over 1200 copies of this report have been issued to builders and others throughout North America. A number of projects using the recommended construction approach are being built in Canada and the United States.

Wood-I Beam

The Department assisted in testing this innovative beam design which is made from Alberta wood products. The test results helped this product gain commercial acceptance. It is now used to a significant extent in residential construction and is a valuable Alberta export. The wood-I beam and test results are described in a report entitled "Development of the TTS Wood-I Floor and Roof Joist System" by Jager Industries.

"Home Maintenance and Repair: A Reference Manual for Homeowners" and **"Residential Construction Practices in Alberta (1900 - 1971)" by E.A. Doherty, Architect.**

Both reports were prepared under one study and provide relevant reference information on residential renovation in response to growing interest in the subject.

The Branch completed a number of other projects under the Program, including those listed below:

Desirable and Undesirable Physical Elements in Rental and Condominium Highrises
by D.J.E. Consulting.

Ecostud Building System
by Ecostud Building Products Ltd.

Calgary Downtown Festival Marketplace Study
by Bruce Stratton Architect

Introduction to Computer Aided Design (CAD) for the Housing Industry
by Terry Frost, Architect

HOME-1: A Sales Forecasting and Start Optimization Model for Home Builders by Strategic Development Services Ltd.

As well, a number of directed studies were completed, including a review of Alberta's home renovation industry and an assessment of manufactured housing foundation systems.

The branch also has been involved with Alberta Economic Development in some initiatives to support the export of Alberta building materials and technology to Japan and other Pacific Rim countries.

The branch administered the 1984 Competition for Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design. This was the first competition of its kind and was initiated to recognize and encourage the achievements of builders who build and market high quality, moderately priced housing in Alberta and to focus public attention on the best examples of such housing. Seven awards of $5,000 each were presented. An overall winner was selected and received an additional award of $10,000. The winning entries provide excellent examples of good design and quality construction. The winners are listed below:

Avalon Homes — Morningview Estates
(overall winner);

Nu-West Group Ltd. — "Birchwood"
Raised Bungalow Model;

Jager Homes Ltd. — "Andorra"
Tri-level Model;

Lincolnberg Homes Inc. — "Escort" Model;

Alldritt Homes — "Virginian-Heritage" Model;

Prairie Sun Developments Ltd. — "Sunridge" Model

R. Brown & Sons Enterprises Ltd. — Wells' House.

The Competition will be held again in 1986.

Housing Registry Program provides funding to nine housing registries. The primary purpose of the housing registries is to act as a housing referral service for special groups. Other activities of the housing registries are to provide information on housing programs to the public and to gather housing information. Housing registries serve senior citizens, the handicapped, the "hard-to-house" and native people.

Edmonton:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry
Accessible Housing Registry (serving the handicapped)
Operation Friendship (serving the hard-to-house)
Boyle Street Co-op (also serving the hard-to-house)
Metis Urban Housing Corporation

Calgary:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry
Handicapped Housing Registry

Lethbridge:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry

Medicine Hat:
Senior Citizens Housing Registry

The 1984/85 budget for the Housing Registry Program was $276,000.

HOME IMPROVEMENT BRANCH

The Home Improvement Branch provides financial assistance through the Seniors' Home Improvement Program and the Home Adaptation Program.

Seniors' Home Improvement Program provides funds to senior citizen homeowners with low to moderate incomes to improve and repair their homes. The program is intended to assist senior citizens to stay longer in their homes and to generate additional economic activity, particularly in the construction sector.

To be eligible for the Seniors' Home Improvement Program grant, applicants must meet income qualifications and be at least 65 years-of-age, unless they are widows or widowers 55 and older. Applicants must have lived in Alberta for at least one year and in Canada at least 10 years prior to application, and be either a Canadian citizen or landed Immigrant. The home must be the place of residence for at least nine months each year.

The amount of grant awarded is determined by the total income of the applicant and spouse for the last calendar year, as outlined in the following schedule:

Total Income	Amount of Grant
$15,000 or less, or presently receiving the Alberta Assured Income Supplement	$3,000
$15,001 to $17,500	$2,000
$17,501 to $20,000	$1,000

Since the commencement of the program on December 1, 1982, a total of 51,319 grant applications have been approved for a total commitment of $144,127,000. Of the approved applications, 87 per cent qualified for the full $3,000, seven per cent received $2,000 and six per cent received $1,000.

During the 1984/85 fiscal year 6,070 grants were approved under the Seniors' Home Improvement Program. The amount commited during this period was $15,685,000. Expenditures by seniors against approved commitments amounted to $32,170,708 during the year.

In February 1984, the income policy for the Seniors' Home Improvement Program was revised, affecting 4,890 applicants who did not receive the full $3,000 grant at the time of approval. If their combined income was lower than at the time of approval their new income would be considered. Since the introduction of the policy, 1,449 supplementary grant applications have been approved, amounting to an additional commitment of $1,776,000.

In order to improve the service provided to Alberta's 42 Indian Bands, a liaison officer joined the branch in 1984.

Spot inspections are undertaken by inspectors of the Home Improvement Branch to monitor the validity of claims made for materials purchased or services performed.

In addition, the branch responded to requests from seniors to help resolve disputes between applicants and contractors or suppliers.

Home Adaptation Program provides grants of $1,000 to homeowners, tenants, or landlords who are wheelchair users or who have a wheelchair user residing with them for adaptations to provide the wheelchair user access and mobility within the home.

Homeowner or tenant applicants must have resided in Alberta for the past year and have a current adjusted family income of not more than $25,500 per year. Landlords who apply must be willing to make adaptations to an existing or proposed residential building to accommodate one or more wheelchair users.

Since the commencement of the program on April 1, 1978, 1,058 applications have been approved, amounting to a commitment of $1,092,000.

A total of 124 applications were approved in the 1984/85 fiscal year for a commitment of $129,000. Of the approved applicants, 92 per cent were homeowners, six per cent were tenants and two per cent were landlords.

GRANTS ADMINISTRATION BRANCH

The Grants Administration Branch provides assistance to Albertans through four programs:

— Alberta Municipal Housing Incentive Program;

— Unique Homes Assistance Program;

— Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program; and

— Extended Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program.

Alberta Municipal Housing Incentive Program was introduced in April 1980 to promote economic land development and construction of medium density housing, and to assist municipalities in financing the cost of growth through the provision of grants. These grants were based on the rate of new housing production in relation to the previous year's production and the number of eligible units built. Housing production levels are measured against the base level, which is the average number of dwellings started in a municipality over the past three years.

The deadline for applications was December 31, 1984 and the program is now terminated.

MUNICIPALITIES THAT RECEIVED FUNDING UNDER THE ALBERTA MUNICIPAL HOUSING INCENTIVE PROGRAM IN 1984/85 FISCAL YEAR

Airdrie	$ 1,500
Athabasca	76,000
Banff School District #102	57,000
Barrhead	151,000
Blackfalds	1,000
Calgary	761,500
Calmar	44,000
Camrose	11,500
Canmore	1,500
Claresholm	6,000
Cochrane	500
Coronation	3,500
Crowsnest Pass	89,000
Didsbury	1,000
Drayton Valley	43,000
Edmonton	683,000
Elk Point	89,500
Fort McMurray	67,500
Grand Centre	107,500
High Prairie	9,500
High River	6,500
Jasper School District #102 (see I.D. #12)	2,000
Lake Louise S.D. 1063	243,000
Lethbridge	144,000
Lloydminster	10,000
Lomond (overpayment returned)	-3,500
Lougheed	1,500
Medicine Hat	1,000
Millet	500
Nampa	8,500
Olds	5,500
Peace River	37,000
Red Deer	20,000
Slave Lake	87,500
St. Albert	118,500
Spruce Grove	3,500
Stony Plain	139,500
Strathcona County #20	1,500
Strathmore	3,000
Taber	36,500
Wainwright	38,500
Westlock (overpayment returned)	-32,500
TOTAL FUNDING	$3,077,000

Unique Homes Assistance Program provides grants to eligible Senior Citizen Homes for 75 per cent of justifiable deficits up to $4.80 per resident, per day. Justifiable deficits are defined as the shortfall between revenue (resident contributions and investment income) and eligible costs for care and services.

The eight homes which received funding provide levels of care which generally fall between that offered in lodges and that offered in nursing homes.

Calgary — Salvation Army Sunset Home	$ 57,759.00
Calgary — Bethany Care	60,962.94
Coaldale — Mennonite Home	17,568.00
Edmonton — Salvation Army Sunset Home	75,542.40
Edmonton — Emmanuel Home	14,054.40
Hythe — Pioneer Home	99,676.50
Medicine Hat — Haven of Rest	120,268.88
Wetaskiwin — Good Shepherd	85,138.81
TOTAL	$530,970.93

Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program was designed to encourage the construction of more rental housing for Albertans in 1980 and 1981 by providing an extra incentive for investors/developers who commenced construction on a multiple unit residential building (MURB) during that period. Under the program, corporations taxable in the Province apply for a tax credit and individuals apply for a tax rebate.

The credit or rebate amount per residential unit is five per cent of eligible construction costs, up to a maximum of $3,000. The total rebate per year cannot exceed Alberta Income Tax payable. However, if an applicant's tax payable is less than the total eligible incentive, the unpaid balance may be carried forward into subsequent years (up to July 1, 1990) until the full amount of the rebate/credit has been claimed.

A total of 944 tax rebate applications were processed during the 1984/85 fiscal year representing an expenditure of $2,256,128.

Extended Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program is similar to the Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program except that it applies to MURB's started in 1982 and 1983. Under this program individuals receive payment in the form of a lump sum grant and corporations receive a refundable tax credit.

For construction starts in 1982, the incentive amount was 12.5 per cent of eligible construction costs up to a maximum of $8,000 per unit. For starts in 1983, the incentive amount was 10 per cent of eligible construction costs up to a maximum of $6,400 per unit.

A total of 81 grant applications were processed during the 1984/85 fiscal year, representing an expenditure of $1,744,875.

MORTGAGE ASSISTANCE BRANCH

The Mortgage Assistance Branch administers the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program and the Modified Program.

Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program was designed to relieve financial pressure on Alberta homeowners caused by high mortgage interest rates existing at that time. Funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, the program commenced on September 1, 1982 and ended on August 31, 1984.

Eligibility for Benefits

Alberta homeowners who were Canadian citizens or landed Immigrants whose principal residence was mortgaged at an interest rate in excess of 12.5 per cent were eligible for benefits.

Mortgage principal amounts up to a maximum of $60,000 per applicant were eligible for interest reduction. Existing mortgages, and mortgages taken out or assumed to buy a home during the benefit period were eligible.

Renegotiation Option

In response to significantly lower interest rates, the Renegotiation Option was announced on February 9, 1983. This option provided reimbursement of certain costs if the mortgage was renegotiated to a lower interest rate.

Program Activity

By the end of March 31, 1985, a total of 163,470 applications had been received, 5,268 of which were received during 1984/85. During the same period, a total of 8,823 renegotiation applications had been received with 7,877 of these applications approved.

A total of 160,181 applications were approved and a total of $231,596,700 in benefits has been paid to March 31, 1985.

Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program

On July 16, 1984 the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program was announced to assist those homeowners who would have faced financial hardship as a result of the termination of their benefits under the original program. This Modified Program was also funded by the Alberta Heritage Savings Trust Fund, and commenced September 1, 1984. It was scheduled to end on August 31, 1985, but has been extended until December 31, 1986.

Eligibility for Benefits

In order to be eligible for benefits under the Modified Program, the homeowner must have been eligible for Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program benefits in August 1984. In addition, the homeowner must spend more than 35 per cent of household income on mortgage payments. The reimbursement benefits are based on the least of:

- the monthly benefit for which the homeowner was eligible in August 1984 under the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program;
- the sum required to effectively reduce the mortgage interest rate to 12.5 per cent; or
- the sum required to reduce the monthly mortgage payment to 35 per cent of household income.

Benefits are usually paid on a monthly basis and may be paid retroactively.

Program Activity

By March 31, 1985, 8,317 applications were received for the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program. A total of 3,535 applications were approved and a total of $1,726,850 in benefits had been paid to March 31, 1985.

Mortgage Interest Review Board

The Mortgage Interest Review Board was established in October 1982 to receive applications for review where the applicant was deemed ineligible or where the assistance calculated was disputed. The Review Board is responsible for review for both programs. Recent activity has focused on the Modified Program. Hearings are held by the Review Board as often as required at suitable locations throughout the Province.

By the end of March 1985, 5,418 applications under the original program had been reviewed by the Mortgage Interest Review Board; of this number 4,421 were allowed and 997 denied.

Between April 1, 1984 and March 31, 1985 1,890 applications were reviewed; of this number 1,427 were allowed and 463 denied.

By the end of March 1985 the Mortgage Interest Review Board had reviewed 239 applications under the Modified Program. Of this number, 148 were allowed and 91 were denied.

II. Rural Housing Division

The Rural Housing Division was established on October 1, 1984 as part of the reorganization of the Department of Housing.

The Rural Housing Division is responsible for the provision of financial, administrative, construction and renovation training assistance, which is directly linked to the provision of modest and affordable housing. Assistance is also provided in the area of pre- and post-occupancy advice on topics such as, responsibilities of tenancy and home ownership, home maintenance and arrears-counselling.

The client groups are rural, mostly northern families and senior citizens, whose sources of income are often derived from seasonal employment, supplemented with unemployment insurance, social assistance or pension benefits. A smaller percentage of the clients' income is derived from small business or farmstead operations. In all cases, the income-range served is in the low to moderate range.

The programs are designed to meet specific needs where conventional housing programs are not suitable or available. All of the programs utilize the principle of direct client and community involvement. Liaison and cooperation with federal and provincial agencies are a fundamental element of the operation, and utilization of the building supply and construction industries is essential.

The Division has four branches:

— Rural Home Assistance Branch;
— Rural and Native Housing Branch;
— Educational Resource Branch; and
— Rural Emergency Home Branch (this program was transferred from Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation to the Department of Housing effective January 1, 1985).

RURAL HOME ASSISTANCE BRANCH

The objective of the Rural Home Assistance Branch is to assist Isolated Communities and Metis Settlements to provide acceptable modest housing for low income families who do not qualify for regular home or home improvement financing. Assistance is provided in the form of grants for materials to enable these communities to construct new homes or improve existing homes of qualifying families. The branch offers administrative and technical assistance to help develop managerial and technical skills within the communities assisted.

The Rural Home Assistance Branch provides assistance through five programs:

Isolated Communities Housing Program assists 26 isolated or semi-isolated communities to construct new, modest homes for eligible families. House plans are provided to each approved community and they are assisted in planning their housing projects. During the 1984/85 fiscal year, 65 families were assisted through grants totalling $1,216,431.

The following isolated communities were assisted during this period:

	Units Built
Wanyandie Flats	1
Muskeeg See Pee	2
Victor Lake	2
Susa Creek	3
Kamisak	2
Grovedale	6
Eureka River	2
Little Buffalo	2
Loon Lake	4
Peerless Lake	6
Trout Lake	4
Sandy Lake	4
Chipewyan Lake	1
Desmarais/Wabasca	6
Calling Lake	4
Owl River	6
Janvier	4
Boyer Summit	2
Stoney Point	3
Conklin	2
	66

Metis Settlement Housing Program provides funds for the construction of new, modest homes for eligible families living on the eight Metis Settlements — Fishing Lake, Elizabeth, Caslan, Kikino, East Prairie, Gift Lake, Peavine and Paddle Prairie. A total of 62 families were assisted during this fiscal year, with a cost commitment of $1,282,428.

The following Metis Settlements were assisted during this period:

	Units Built
Elizabeth	8
Fishing Lake	6
Caslan	8
Kikino	11
Gift Lake	6
Peavine	8
East Prairie	6
Paddle Prairie	9
	62

Rural Home Repair Program assists all approved Isolated Communities and Metis Settlements to repair and upgrade existing homes of eligible families. A list of required repairs and a cost estimate for materials is prepared by the Rural Home Assistance Branch. A grant is provided to the Housing Associations based on these estimates. During this fiscal year, 59 applications were approved at a total cost of $219,374.

Rural Housing Employment Support Program provides funds to enable approved Isolated Communities to employ and train a local work force to construct new homes and to repair existing homes. Through the Employment Initiatives Package of Alberta Manpower, the Rural Home Assistance Branch received an allocation of $100,000. This funding assisted six isolated Communities to employ 40 trainees during a six-month program.

The branch disseminates information on assistance available through these programs and ensures that need and eligibility criteria are met by the community and applicant families. Each approved community has a registered non-profit Housing Association. Grants are provided to these Housing Associations on behalf of approved applicant families. The Associations ensure that all projects are completed in accordance with their agreements with the Province of Alberta. The branch provides construction supervision and technical guidance through building inspections and monitors the financial cost of projects.

Northern Water and Sewer Program enables all approved Isolated Communities and Metis Settlements to install roughed-in indoor plumbing systems for special medical/disabled and senior citizen applicants. During the 1984/85 fiscal year, grants were approved to install roughed-in plumbing in 155 homes for a total of $155,000. Twenty-one applications were approved for complete plumbing systems at a cost of $63,469. Through a cost-sharing agreement with Alberta Municipal Affairs, an additional $227,656 was granted to provide exterior plumbing services for 162 families on the eight Metis Settlements. In total, during this fiscal year, 338 families were assisted at a cost of $446,125.

RURAL AND NATIVE HOUSING BRANCH

The Rural and Native Housing Program has been in place since 1974 and was previously administered as a section of the Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch. On March 1, 1985, the Rural and Native Housing Branch was established as a separate branch of the Rural Housing Division.

The Rural and Native Housing Program is a cost-shared Federal/Provincial program. Funding for the construction of the housing units is provided by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation, while any subsidies and other costs are shared on a 75/25 basis, with the Federal Government contributing 75 per cent. The program provides modest housing for needy families in most rural sections of Alberta, provided they meet certain income and other requirements.

In addition to providing housing, the program includes extensive home ownership training for all participants. This includes participants' classes in personal financial management and budgeting, house-type selection, as well as home maintenance and repairs.

The program also completes post-occupancy repairs on units which were built in previous years, and where normal builders' warranties have expired. Total cost of repairs last year was $96,200 on 17 units.

Under the Rural and Native Housing Program 304 Albertans were assisted during the 1984/85 fiscal year. A breakdown by areas is as follows: Bonnyville 99, Calgary 11, Edmonton 9, Grande Prairie 27, Lethbridge 6, Peace River 76, Red Deer 36, Westlock/Hinton 40.

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCE BRANCH

The Educational Resource Branch was established on March 1, 1985. It was formerly a part of the Co-operative Housing Action Program Branch.

The basic functions of the branch are to provide interested Albertans with training in the areas of home ownership, home construction and mortgage financing.

During the fiscal year 1984/85, 101 Albertans were provided with home ownership advice under the program.

RURAL EMERGENCY HOME BRANCH

The objective of the Rural Emergency Home Program assists qualified low income, rural families and senior citizens who may face the following types of emergencies:

— their home is destroyed by fire, flood or storm, and the family needs a place to live immediately;

— their home is overcrowded; or

— it is not safe or healthy to live in.

The Rural Emergency Home Program also may provide units to families waiting for permanent housing, or for families relocating permanently to new communities to take advantage of employment opportunities. Emergency homes may be located anywhere in the Province, but are primarily available to Albertans living in northern rural communities, Metis Settlements and Indian Reserves through separate agreements with Band Councils. The program provides an opportunity for ownership at substantial savings to the tenants who are interested in purchasing the mobile home. Advice on tenant responsibilities is given to families on topics such as home maintenance and payment of rent.

When the Department of Housing assumed responsibility for the program from Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation on January 1, 1985, there were 1,150 occupied mobile homes, 108 were located on Indian Reserves.

III. Planning Secretariat

The Planning Secretariat was set up as a Division of the Department of Housing in 1984, as a result of the reorganization study. Its overall mandate is to provide the total policy development and planning function for both the Department and the Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation.

The Division is divided into three branches. The Market and Economic Analysis Branch, and two Policy and Program Development Branches, one associated with Department programs and activity, and the other responding to the Corporation's policy and program needs.

MARKET AND ECONOMIC ANALYSIS BRANCH

The Market and Economic Analysis Branch provides professional research, market and program analysis in the area of housing. The branch undertakes:

- economic analysis involving the forecasting, surveying interpretation and dissemination of information about housing;
- regional analysis relating to the expected housing requirements in specific areas or communities in the Province; and
- a program analysis function, usually in conjunction with other branches in the Planning Secretariat.

Major branch activities over the year included:

- a monthly report on residential construction activity in the Province;
- a monthly report on residential mortgage foreclosures;
- an annual survey and report on vacancy rates and rental costs in 86 communities;
- short- and medium-term forecasts of expected housing construction levels and housing requirements in the Province;
- an assessment of the impact on housing of major resource and economic development in a number of communities across Alberta;
- participation in a review of the availability of mortgage insurance in the Province; and
- assessments of a number of housing programs available elsewhere in Canada and in the United States.

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH (CORPORATION)

The Policy and Program Development Branch (Corporation) is responsible for the review and evaluation of housing programs delivered by Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation. The branch also is responsible for conducting market assessments for all applications for social housing projects and, based on the assessments, recommends the appropriate course of action.

The functions of this branch, which was established on January 1, 1985 previously rested with the Alberta Housing Corporation and the Alberta Home Mortgage Corporation.

In order to achieve its goals, the branch:

- assesses alternative housing policies;
- monitors and evaluates programs;
- develops guidelines for new programs and recommends alternative guidelines for existing programs;
- researches housing need and demand; and
- participates in interdepartmental and intergovernmental policy development.

Highlights of branch activities during the year were:

- participation on an interdepartmental committee examining the long-term care situation in Alberta;
- the development of the Rent Supplement Program;
- completion of market assessments for requests for housing projects; and
- analysis in conjunction with the Market and Economic Analysis Branch, of the availability of mortgage insurance in Alberta.

POLICY AND PROGRAM DEVELOPMENT BRANCH (DEPARTMENT)

The Policy and Program Development Branch (Department) examines and evaluates alternative directions for programs delivered by the Department of Housing. To achieve these goals the branch:

- assesses housing policy alternatives and researches client housing needs;
- monitors and evaluates programs;
- develops guidelines for new and modified housing programs;
- assists in developing administrative procedures for new or modified housing programs;
- undertakes planning studies; and
- co-ordinates and participates in interdepartmental and intergovernmental policy development activities.

Highlights of branch activities during the year were:

- a review of the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program;
- development of income guidelines and procedures for the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program and worked with Public Affairs Branch to develop forms;
- a review of the rental market in Alberta;
- a review of the Senior Citizen Unique Homes Program;
- analysis of a proposal to provide grants-in-lieu of property taxes on tax-exempt senior citizens projects;
- a review of housing programs delivered in northern Alberta;
- preparation of policy and procedures manuals, and assistance in developing forms and brochures for the Rural Emergency Home Program;
- assistance in implementing changes to Rural and Native Housing Program guidelines; and
- participation of the Interdepartmental Committee on Family Violence and the Interdepartmental Standing Committee on Human Rights.

IV. Finance and Administration Division

The Finance and Administration Division performs the following functions:

- coordinates, consolidates, analyses and recommends departmental budgets;
- ensures the accuracy and validity of all financial transactions, including prompt processing of these transactions and collection of departmental revenues;
- provides comprehensive administrative services and advice to the Department; and
- provides comprehensive EDP and word processing services and advice to the Department.

This mandate is carried out by three branches — Finance, Administrative Services and Systems.

FINANCE BRANCH

The branch is responsible for the following activities:

- co-ordinates, reviews and recommends the departmental budget;
- monitors expenditures against budgetary intentions by issuing reports and recommending fiscal solutions;
- verifies all expenditures associated with departmental budgets;
- issues financial information documents to program areas and provides interpretation and advice as required;
- conducts reviews of financial documents to program areas and provides interpretation and advice as required;
- conducts reviews of financial concepts among expenditure and/or receiving officer to assist in fulfilling their responsibilities; and
- ensures that all departmental receivables and revenues are properly documented, collected and reported.

During the fiscal year, the accounts payable staff processed a monthly average of 2,700 invoices which totalled $311.3 million.

Accounts receivable dealt with an average of 1,500 transactions monthly, which totalled approximately $2.7 million, and distributed salary cheques for the Department.

ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES BRANCH

The Administrative Services Branch consists of three major units: the records centre, supply and services centre and the library. Its support services are extended to branches of the Department in 13 locations.

The supply and services centre provided the following services:

- purchase of material and supplies, leasing services, equipment and furniture;
- vehicle administration, insurance co-ordination, mailing and courier service, space allocations, maintenance of facilities, parking, telecommunications and travel co-ordination;
- co-ordination and control of fixed assets;
- telephone reception and information services to the public;
- central printing and duplication service;
- contract administration.

Accomplishments in 1984/85 included:

- implementation of a Stock Item Request Inventory System (S.I.R.S.); and
- provision of support to the Department in the area of general administration and consultative services.

The records centre designs and implements records management practices. The aim of this unit is to establish an effective program for the systematic creation, maintenance and ultimate disposition of departmental records. The elements involved include: file management, records scheduling and disposition; records equipment and supplies.

The records scheduling and disposal program continued to be very effective this year. Where possible, regularly scheduled transfers were initiated, thus minimizing clerical time and increasing efficiency. Over 290 cubic feet of records were transferred to semi-active storage.

Other activities included: Developing a subject classification system for administrative records and conversion of Home Improvement Branch records.

The library provides a collection of approximately 4,000 books and 75 periodical subscriptions as well as government documents, archive items and microfiche for use by Department and Corporation staff. Library staff also do research and reference work to identify relevant and timely sources of information and acquire and organize these materials.

In 1984/85, the library completed a "Guide to Library Resources". This publication along with the 1984/85 library catalogue was distributed to Department of Housing and Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation staff throughout the Province.

SYSTEMS BRANCH

The Systems Branch is responsible for the following activities:

- formulation of short- and long-range plans and objectives for departmental information and office automation systems;
- planning and managing the development and implementation of new information and office automation systems; and
- providing maintenance, technical and consultative support for operational information and office automation system.

During the reporting period the branch developed and implemented new systems for the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, Alberta Rental Investment Incentive Program and Rural Emergency Home Program. Maintenance, technical support and consultative services were provided for systems of the Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, Seniors' Home Improvement Program, Seniors' Housing Registry and Apartment Vacancy and Rental Rate Survey, Innovative Housing Grants, as well as administrative support systems.

Office automation support and consultative service was provided to all branches of the Department.

V. Public Affairs Branch

The major responsibility of this branch is to provide communication services in support of departmental goals.

To help meet these goals, Public Affairs provides advice and professional expertise in the development of communication materials to inform the public about the Department's policies, programs and services. Information is provided through news releases, brochures, factsheets, reports, audio-visual productions, displays and advertising.

The branch is responsible for facilitating and coordinating joint communication plans with other Alberta Government departments and also provides internal communication advice and assistance.

Major Activities

During the past year, the focus of branch activities has been in support of the Alberta Heritage Fund Modified Mortgage Interest Reduction Program, Innovative Housing Grants Program, the Alberta Awards of Excellence in Housing Design, the Rural Emergency Home Program, the Rural Home Assistance Program and the Rural and Native Housing Program. Two housing information publications were completed and distributed. "A Guide to Housing Information" provides a brief description of housing programs and information available from various Alberta Government departments. A 20-page booklet, "A List of Department of Housing Publications" is a convenient reference.

Public Affairs Branch provided public relations consultation, writing and editorial services, as well as co-ordinating graphic design, print, photographic, distribution and display services. The branch continued to monitor and implement the departmental visual identity program, as well as administering ISBN and ISSN numbering for all departmental publications.

The Public Affairs Branch supervised updating of the audio-visual presentation for the Alberta Awards of Excellence; two advertising campaigns; co-ordinated special events, such as the meeting and reception for the SANWA mission from Tokyo, Japan.

VI. Personnel Branch

This branch has responsibility, authority and accountability for the following functions:

- co-ordinating and implementing the classification of employees, ensuring propriety of all transactions;
- co-ordinating, administering and implementing comprehensive services for the Department in the areas of:
  - recruitment and selection,
  - training and development
  - manpower planning,
  - personnel planning,
  - career counselling,
  - salary and benefits, and
  - occupational health and safety.
- investigating, analyzing and recommending solutions for employee relations problems; and
- co-ordinating the management and employee appraisal process and administering the related systems and procedures.

Major Activities

The volume of activity increased within the Personnel Branch over the previous year with establishment of the Planning Secretariat and as operations expanded in the Rural Housing Division.

Staffing and classification activity continued at active levels, particularly in the newly acquired Planning Secretariat and the Rural Emergency Home Branch. A total of 88 classification actions and 101 staff recruitment changes/transitions occurred.

Other branch activity included resolution of a number of employee relations issues with respect to the administration of the Collective Agreement.

Activity regarding training and development as a supplement to course work provided in the Government training calendar included:

- a Department-oriented survival and first-aid workshop for employees who travel extensively through remote areas; and
- technical training through educational institutions for employees engaged in housing rehabilitation.

VII. Financial Statement

COMPARATIVE SUMMARY OF PROGRAM EXPENDITURES

	1983/84 ($000)	1984/85* ($000)
Departmental Support Services		
Minister's Office	231	217
Deputy Minister's Office	145	165
Administrative Support	967	1,039
Personnel Administration	130	177
Public Affairs		37
Total Vote 1	1,473	1,635
Policy Development and Financial Assistance for Housing		
Planning Secretariat	937	1,021
Financial Assistance and Research	2,627	2,001
Rural Housing Division	2,628	4,033
Financial Assistance for Housing	113,378	52,374
Total Vote 2	119,570	59,429
Alberta Heritage Fund Mortgage Interest Reduction Program		
Program Support	5,191	4,023
Financial Assistance	111,722	32,906
Total Vote 3	116,913	36,929
Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation	306,751	185,967
Total Vote 4	306,751	185,967
TOTAL	$544,707	$283,960

*Unaudited

Appendix A — Committees

The Department of Housing works towards its objectives through a number of committees. Among them are:

- Alberta Planning Board — reviews regional plans, finances the Regional Planning Commission, decides on subdivision appeals and Subdivision Regulation Waivers and advises the Minister of Municipal Affairs on the Planning Act and provincial land use policy.
- Interdepartmental Committee on Regulatory Reform — co-ordinates departmental responses on private sector submissions made to the Caucus Committee on Regulatory Reform.
- Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation/Alberta Mortgage and Housing Corporation/Department of Housing Liaison Committee — reviews joint programs and exchanges information on matters of Federal/Provincial concern.
- Economic Committee of Canadian Home Builders Association — reviews and forecasts housing in Calgary.
- Alberta Home Builders Association/Housing Liaison Committee — exchanges information on areas of mutual concern.
- Manufactured Housing Advisory Council — provides a forum for industry and government on issues related to the manufactured housing industry.
- Canadian Home Builders Association Technical Research Committee — assists, encourages and co-ordinates technical research to produce economical housing of improved design, and educates members, the public, and government regarding promising housing innovations.
- Rural and Native Tripartite Committee — co-ordinates the Federal/Provincial Rural and Native Housing Programs in Alberta.
- Innovative Housing Grants Committee — reviews and approves applications.